

lent, and from that standpoint some of his tales are undoubtedly masterpieces of their kind.

Unfortunately there was insanity in Guy de Maupassant's

family, which was old, of good nobility, but limited means.

His father, who had been a painter and had played a

prominent part in founding a famous Paris art club, had

died in a lunatic asylum. The same fate befel his brother;

and, according to some accounts, there was insanity on Ms

mother's side also. In any case, from birth onward a

dreadful threat hung over Guy de Maupassant, and the life

he led from the time he became his own master was not

calculated to ward off the danger. He was a man of the

strongest passions, a *leau male*, as the French say; and

women began the work which absinthe, opium, and morphia

completed. At last, still young in years, at the height of

his celebrity, he attempted his life, and was only saved

from immediate death to languish awhile in an asylum.

One cannot think of him, as of some others, without feeling

the force of the contention that very little may at times

separate genius from insanity.

Immediately "Les Soirees de Mefian" appeared, its contributors were chaffed by the newspapers for

attributing undue importance to themselves; and Zola was said to be

bringing up these young men in leading-

strings for the express advancement of his literary theories. A rather acrimonious controversy ensued, Zola repeatedly declaring that he was not, and did not wish to be, a *chef d'école*, and that those with whom he was associated were his friends and not his disciples. But the discussion suddenly ceased, for the literary world of Paris was startled by the unexpected news of Gustave Flaubert's death at Oroisset, near Rouen.